

Check Your Old Cigar Boxes for Rev -Perfs

Chuck Spaulding (#2355)

Our research for the Rev-Perfs project has uncovered an interesting type of perf in tobacco stamps. A small number of the perf designs have been in cigarette stamps, but the majority of the perfs are found in cigar stamps. Figure 1 shows a typical cigar stamp that was placed on a cigar box so that when you opened the box the stamp was torn in half. If you were a dedicated stamp collector you probably found ways to remove the stamp before you opened the box. I know that my father did this because I found a small glassine full of damaged cigar stamps in his collection and he didn't collect tobacco stamps.



Some of the cigar designs start with a letter but most of them start with a number. The perf design is usually in two lines with a fixed head on one line and an adjustable date line placed above or below the fixed head. The design of the fixed head usually started with a number that we believe is a factory number. Some designs are followed by a second number that we believe is a district number in the state where the factory was located. The last element in the design is usually an abbreviation of the state.

Figure 2 shows part of a typical page from the Rev-Perfs work sheets. The factory numbers shown are from 35 to 39. Our research has discovered factory numbers from 1 to 2260 with many factory numbers that are probably missing. We don't think that it was mandatory to perforate these stamps because we have found cigar stamps with the factory numbers, district numbers, the states and the dates printed on the face of the stamps. So far, we have discovered about 260 of these Rev-Perf types, but we suspect that there are many hundreds of perf designs yet to be discovered.

This became very clear after Art Mongan (3443) a member of the project's working group, made

contact with Tony Hyman the Curator of the National Cigar Museum. In Mr. Hyman's communications with Art he noted that a conservative estimate says there were 250,000 U.S. cigar factories. A good quarter to perhaps a third of these still existed after the advent of perforation canceling of cigar revenues.

Ci	35.1.PA/d 1929-31	35-1-PA +2-11-29
Ci	35.10 O/d 1940	35-10 O 11-13 40
Ci	36.FLA/d 1939-56	36-FLA +2-28-56
Ci	37.FLA/d 1918-20	37-FLA 12 318
Ci	38.1.O/d 1930	38-1-O +6-25-30
Ci	39.MICH/d 1939	39 MICH +9-22-39
Ci	39.14.NY/d 1926	39-14-NY 12 826

Not to Scale - Need Photo.

Wow! That's a lot of cigar Rev-Perfs to discover. We don't expect to find them all, but Club members can help us by checking their accumulations of cigar and tobacco stamps. The stamps are usually printed on blue paper. The best way to copy the perfs is to place the stamp against the photocopier glass and print with a dark setting. The result should be white dots on a dark background. With a computer scanner we can reverse the perf to black dots on a white background. If you printed the perf in reverse, the scanner can reverse the design so it reads correctly.

In Figure 2 you will notice that we have shown no users of these Rev-Perfs. Finding the users is very difficult. With a postal perfin you can search for a cover and find a user in the corner card. With a cigar perf you have to find a cigar box to find the user. Club members may be able to help us by

looking around their houses for old cigar boxes. When I was a kid I always stored things (mostly stamps) in old cigar boxes. Many members probably did the same thing. Look in the garage and basement, you may have screws and other things stored in old cigar boxes. If you find any, please record what is printed on the boxes or photocopy it, especially if the perforated cigar stamps are still on the boxes. I did a search of my house and found two old cigar boxes, which yielded some useful information.

We would appreciate any help in finding out who issued these factory and district numbers and if there is a master listing of the users. For those who have a computer and like to surf the web, please search for a source for this information. We have a similar problem with the oleomargarine perfs that start with a number. I'll write that story in a future article.
